

IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) An expansion valve assembly, comprising:
an expansion valve cassette unit including an expansion valve cassette flange member and a stepped-down pipe member connected to the expansion valve cassette flange member, the stepped-down pipe member defined by a first pipe section having a first diameter and a first through hole formed therethrough, a second pipe section having a second diameter and a second through hole formed therethrough and a third pipe section having a third diameter and a third through hole formed therethrough with the second pipe section connected to and between the first and third pipe sections and the second diameter being smaller than the first diameter and being larger than the third diameter and the first pipe section connected to the expansion valve cassette flange member;

a housing having a housing refrigerant path extending along a longitudinal direction and an a stepped-down expansion valve cassette unit hole in fluid communication with and extending transversely to and through the housing refrigerant path and sized for accommodating the expansion valve cassette unit via a seal member in a close-fitting relationship, the stepped-down expansion valve cassette unit hole defined by a mounting hole, a first hole section having a first hole diameter, a second hole section having a second hole diameter and a third hole section having a third hole diameter in communication with one another such that the mounting hole receives the expansion valve cassette flange member, the first hole section receives the first pipe section, the second hole section receives the second pipe section and the third hole section receives the third pipe section, the housing refrigerant path including a first housing refrigerant path portion having a refrigerant exit hole and aligned with the first through hole of the first pipe section, a second refrigerant path portion aligned with the second through hole of the second pipe section and a third refrigerant path portion having a refrigerant entrance hole and aligned with the third through hole of the

third pipe section, the first housing refrigerant path portion, the second refrigerant path portion and the third refrigerant path portion disposed apart from and parallel to one another, a-the refrigerant entrance hole and a-the refrigerant exit hole formed into a common side surface of the housing with the refrigerant entrance hole and the refrigerant exit hole extending parallel to one another; and
a generally flat flange having a refrigerant entrance path defined by a first flange pipe section and a refrigerant exit path defined by a second flange pipe section, the first and second flange pipe sections projecting from a common flat surface of the flange and extending parallel to one another, the refrigerant entrance hole sized and adapted to receive the first flange pipe section in a sealed manner and the refrigerant exit hole sized and adapted to receive the second flange pipe section in a sealed manner, the flange connected to the housing with the flat surface of the flange and the common side surface of the housing being in face-to-face contact with each other.

9. (Previously Presented) An expansion valve assembly according to claim 8, further comprising a bolt wherein the flange is connected to the housing by the bolt extending into and through the flange and into the common side surface of the housing.

10. (Currently Amended) An expansion valve assembly according to claim 8, further comprising a first seal ring in contact with and surrounding the first flange pipe member section and a second seal ring in contact with and surrounding the second flange pipe member section, the first and second seal rings being disposed in the respective refrigerant entrance hole and refrigerant exit hole when the flange is connected to the housing.

11. (New) An expansion valve assembly according to claim 8, further comprising a first cassette seal member disposed around the first pipe section and in contact with the housing, the first pipe section and the expansion valve cassette flange member to prevent fluid communication between the mounting

hole and the first hole section, a second cassette seal member disposed around the second pipe section and in contact with the housing and the first and second pipe sections to prevent fluid communication between the first hole section and the second hole section and a third cassette seal member disposed around the third pipe section and in contact with the housing and the second and third pipe sections to prevent fluid communication between the second hole section and the third hole section.